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UNCLAS PRETORIA 001166

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/EPS AND AF/S/TCRAIG AND KGATHER  
COMMERCE FOR 4510/ITA/IEP/ANESA/OA/JDIEMOND  
TREASURY FOR BRESNICK, LSTURM, AND AJEWELL  
DEPT PASS USTR FOR PCOLEMAN, WJACKSON AND KSCHAGRIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EINV](#) [ETRD](#) [EFIN](#) [ECPS](#) [ECON](#) [SF](#)  
SUBJECT: FINAL ICT CHARTER DELAYED

1. A March 16 Business Day article reported that the information and communications technology (ICT) charter steering committee was being reorganized to draw up a new empowerment charter for the industry. However, Department of Communications Director of Policy and chair of the current consultative process Joe Mjwara told a Reuters reporter that the Business Day story was "without foundation."

2. Mjwara acknowledged that the original March deadline for finalizing the ICT Charter has been extended to June to allow the steering committee to resolve outstanding issues including equity ownership, composition of the industry council monitoring Charter compliance, and whether state-owned ICT companies should abide by the ICT Charter or targets published by the regulatory body (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa).

3. In November 2004, the ICT Charter working group delivered a fifth draft of the charter to a new steering committee for resolution of outstanding issues. The new committee is operating under the auspices of the National Economic Development and Labor Council (NEDLAC) and includes representation from business, labor, government, community, and civil society. Industry sources and an American Chamber of Commerce official told Econoff that this consultative process has generated a refined version of the ICT Charter, reducing it from 100 pages to approximately 20. Post is seeking to obtain a copy of this document.

FRAZER